

SPECIAL ASSESSMENT NEEDS POLICY

IMATRAN YHTEISLUKIO – THE IB SCHOOL OF SOUTH KARELIA

SCHOOL 2209

IBO Mission statement:

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

School's Mission statement:

We educate open-minded and active lifelong learners, who respect and appreciate other people and cultures as well as their own culture. They learn how they can have an influence with their own actions in different situations.



IB learner profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

As IB learners we strive to be:

INQUIRERS

We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

KNOWLEDGEABLE

We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

THINKERS

We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

COMMUNICATORS

We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

PRINCIPLED

We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

OPEN-MINDED

We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

CARING

We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

RISK-TAKERS

We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

BALANCED

We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intellectual, physical, and emotional—to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

REFLECTIVE

We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

The IB learner profile represents 10 attributes valued by IB World Schools. We believe these attributes, and others like them, can help individuals and groups become responsible members of local, national and global communities.



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THE IB SCHOOL OF SOUTH KARELIA (SCHOOL 2209)

SPECIAL ASSESSMENT NEEDS POLICY

This document states the policy for Diploma Programme candidates with special assessment needs. All candidates should be allowed to demonstrate their ability under assessment conditions that are as fair as possible. Where standard assessment conditions could put candidates with special educational needs at a disadvantage by preventing them from demonstrating their level of attainment, special arrangements may be authorized. This policy applies to candidates affected by a temporary, long-term or permanent disability or illness, including candidates with a learning difficulty.

The purpose of this document is to provide information about the arrangements available for all teachers and candidates with special needs in assignment completion, assessment and in their written examinations.

Students in The IB School of South Karelia come from different backgrounds and show a range of learning profiles. The school provides support for its students with learning and/or special educational needs to ensure that all pupils perform as well as possible in their studies and that they are able to make correct and appropriate decisions concerning their education and career choices. The potential of each student should be maximized.

Guidance and counselling is seen as the work of all education personnel. Thus teachers are required to treat the students as individuals and help them to progress according to their own capabilities. Learners should also experience success in their studies as well as the joy of learning. Today all students have the right to educational support.

Special educational needs

Special educational needs refer to candidates with individual learning needs, who have the intellectual capacity to meet all curriculum and assessment requirements, and who require special arrangements to demonstrate their level of achievement.

Candidates who require special assessment arrangements may display the characteristics of one or more of the following special educational needs:

1. Specific learning issues, language and communication disorders

- Significant issues in reading, writing, spelling or manipulating numbers associated with issues in processing symbolic language (for example, problems interpreting music notation, dyslexia, dyscalculia).
- Speech and language issues characterized by communication problems (for example, aphasia, dysphasia, articulation problems).

2. Social, emotional and behavioral issues

- Includes: attention deficit disorder (ADD)/attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); autistic spectrum disorders; withdrawn, depressive or suicidal attitudes; obsessive preoccupation with eating habits; school phobia; substance abuse; disruptive antisocial and uncooperative behaviour; and anger, frustration and violence.

3. Physical and sensory conditions

- Physical disabilities include a wide range of conditions that are not always immediately obvious, but affect mobility.
- Sensory issues: hearing—embraces an extensive range of hearing loss from mild to profound and can present communication difficulties; visual - includes difficulties with either the structure or function of the eye, affecting vision.

4. Medical conditions

- The most common being: congenital heart disease, epilepsy, asthma, cystic fibrosis, hemophilia, sickle cell anemia, diabetes, renal failure, eczema, rheumatoid disorders, allergies, leukemia and other cancers.

5. Mental health issues

- A wide range of conditions that can affect a person's state of mind, ranging from psychotic conditions, such as schizophrenia and manic depression, to eating disorders, anxieties and emotional distress caused by circumstances in a candidate's life.

Responsibilities of the school

1. Before accepting a student with special educational needs as a candidate for the Diploma Programme, coordinators should consider whether suitable arrangements, for both teaching and assessment, can be made for that student.
2. Careful consideration should be given to a candidate's choice of subjects. Some subjects may pose particular difficulties for a candidate with special needs. Consultation with IB Cardiff may be appropriate before confirming a candidate's subjects.
3. To accommodate a candidate with a special assessment need, it is essential that the coordinator consults all teachers concerned at an early stage in a candidate's study of the Diploma Programme.
4. All requests for special arrangements submitted by a coordinator must have the support of the head of school. (All correspondence from IB Cardiff concerning

candidates with special assessment needs will normally be addressed to the coordinator.)

5. Before submitting appropriate documentation to IB Cardiff, the school must obtain consent from the candidate and/or the candidate's parents or guardian.
6. An application for special arrangements must be made on behalf of a candidate on a request form submitted by the coordinator or the head of school. A teacher who specializes in teaching students with special needs may complete the form, but must not be the signatory. An application will not be accepted directly from a candidate, or from a relative or guardian of a candidate.
7. The school is responsible for making all arrangements for approving and appointing a scribe, reader, prompter, practical assistant/aide or communicator. The person providing support must not be another candidate, a relative of the candidate, or a representative from an advisory service where a conflict of interest may be apparent or perceived. The IB does not pay a fee or expenses to a person providing support, nor does the IB pay for the hiring or purchasing of special equipment.
8. If special arrangements are requested, the coordinator must ensure that the candidate is, or becomes, familiar with those arrangements. The candidate must be familiar with any special equipment, including a computer and its software, authorized for use in an examination. If support from a scribe, reader, prompter, practical assistant/aide or communicator is required, before the examination the candidate must practice with the person acting in this capacity.
9. The school is responsible for ensuring that all equipment authorized for a candidate with special assessment needs functions correctly and that there is a member of staff who is familiar with its use (for example, a Braille machine, computer software).

10. The school's representative (for example teacher, form teacher, student counsellor or other) is responsible to react and assist students immediately when a need for special needs arises.

Arrangements

How possible cases of special educational needs are detected:

- Any teacher or any other member of the staff who notices a problem must act on it by contacting the support group with the permission of the student. This will activate the process of the student support.
- In addition to this, the special educational needs teacher informs the first graders about support possibilities
- All first graders are tested for learning difficulties at the beginning of the school year
- There is also a possibility for extended testing if needed. This is coordinated by the special needs teacher.

Support for the student

There are various places where students may find help and support. Here is an outline of what is available.

Collective Student Support Group

This group is formed to plan the welfare of the school in general. It consists of the principal, school nurse, school curator, school psychologist, guidance counsellors and special needs teacher and other specialists if needed.

Individual Student Support Group

This group is formed case-by-case to support the student and guardians. It consists of the school's staff and health care and other specialists (for example therapist or school curator) based on the student's needs.

Special needs teacher

- discussions with the special needs teacher are confidential
- helps with recognizing learning difficulties
- plans study strategies with the students
- assists the students and teachers in implementing these strategies
- supports the students in all areas of their well-being in cooperation with other specialists
- co-ordinates student's special needs arrangements with the teachers
- Parents or guardians may also contact the special needs teacher if they wish to discuss a student's studies.

The school nurse

The school nurse is available every day. The students can make reservations for the school doctor, physical therapist, psychologist and other special needs people through the school nurse via e-environment (Wilma), e-mail or phone. The students can also meet the school nurse without an appointment 8.00-9.00 daily.

Guidance counselor

The guidance counselor advises student on matters concerning their studies in general and also in issues concerning their future studies. Discussions with the guidance counselor are confidential. Parents or guardians may also contact the guidance counselor if they wish to discuss a student's studies.

Form teacher

- monitors student's studies
- helps those students who have low grades: advises students and directs them to the special needs teacher, guidance counselor or IB coordinator when necessary
- takes feedback from the students
- interviews all students during the first grade and second grade and may also call up a student for a meeting if needed
- cooperates with the student support group and guidance counsellor

At least once per period, the students will meet with the form teacher. These meetings are used to distribute information to students (e.g. schedules), but they can also be used for other activities.

Subject teacher

Subject teachers are experts in their own subjects and therefore monitor student performance therein. They offer advice to students in matters concerning their own subjects.

The teacher is responsible for reacting and assisting students immediately when a need for special needs arises by contacting a member of the student support group with the permission of the student.

Subject teachers have to ensure that students attend classes regularly. If there are unexplained absences the subject teacher informs the form teacher.

Arrangements that may be granted from the IBO

- Additional time – normally 25% more time.
- Rest periods – supervised, the candidate must not work on the exam during rest periods.
- Computer for writing the answers. Voice-activated technology or augmentative speech equipment (if the student has used these in working at the school).

- Scribes – another person writes down the candidate’s answers.
- Readers – another person reads aloud the questions to the candidate and can also read back the students’ answers.
- Communicators – another person who gives the information to the candidate with a hearing impairment (for example sign language).
- Prompters – another person ensures that a candidate will pay attention to the examination.
- Modifications to examination papers – for example enlarged print, print or coloured paper.
- Audio recordings of examination papers.
- Audio recordings of responses to examination papers – the candidate can dictate answers.
- Transcriptions – the candidate’s response is submitted in a form other than the candidate’s own handwriting.
- Alternative venues for examinations – the candidate may be too ill to write the exam at school, but is able to take the examination at home or in hospital.
- Extension to deadlines – the candidate may not be able to completing work in time due to illness or accident.
- Assistance with practical work – the candidate may have a physical disability and need assistance with practical work.
- Exemptions from assessments – an assessment component or part may demand a physiological function that the candidate is unable to perform.

Teaching strategies

Developing a positive classroom climate to support the learning of all students requires that students are appropriately challenged by their learning, that expectations of them are high but realistic, where students belong to the community and feel cared for, trusted, understood, valued and safe. Students need to be listened to, have their opinions sought, and be provided with opportunities to succeed. It is important that all students are included in decisions about their learning. Before assuming that a student needs to be assessed for a learning difficulty, it is important to consider if there are any other issues that may be hindering learning.

Guidelines for the teachers

- Provide a safe, affirming environment to build confidence and self-esteem.
- Cooperative, knowledgeable, accessible schools that welcome parents into the learning partnership are best placed to support the students in overcoming challenges and to optimize learning experiences.
- Teach in line with the IB's approaches to learning and the IB's four principles of good practice.
- Set tasks that are realistic and achievable.
- Arrange peer support.
- Have positive, realistic expectations and use these to build self-esteem and self-belief
- Create a positive accepting environment that understands the challenges that the students may experience

Curriculum and learning choices should be made in collaboration with the students and their parents.

When teaching a student with special assessment need the teachers are advised to use the document "Meeting student learning diversity in the classroom" published by the IBO.

Special Educational Needs Policy Implementation, Evaluation and Review

The Special Educational Needs Policy is a working document written and compiled by the IB staff at the IB School of South Karelia. The policy is reviewed annually and is available in Onedrive, in written form in the school office and on the school's web-site.

Resources:

IBO documents:

Learning diversity in the International Baccalaureate programmes: Special educational needs within the International Baccalaureate programmes.

Towards a continuum of international education, pp. 28-32 “Special educational needs” section.

Candidates with assessment access requirements.

The IB guide to inclusive education: a resource for whole school development.

Handbook of procedures for the Diploma Programme.

Support areas in the OCC.